

## Principles for the New Covenant

### Lesson Scope: [Luke 6](#)

*References in brackets are to Luke 6 unless otherwise noted*

#### Lesson Focus

The events of this chapter begin with the second Sabbath of Jesus' public ministry (6:1). A conflict developed between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees over the multitude of extra-Biblical Sabbath regulations imposed upon the people. The scribes and Pharisees very quickly realized that Jesus and His message were diametrically opposed to their agenda, and they were already trying to figure out how to get rid of Him.

"In those days" Jesus chose His twelve disciples after a night season of prayer. Shortly thereafter He met the multitude in a plain where many came to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. With this audience, Jesus gave teaching specifically to His disciples very similar to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount.

The teachings in this sermon touch the core of Christian experience. A change of heart and life makes obedience possible.

Christ established standards for the New Covenant that transcends Old Testament Law. He enables His followers to meet these high standards when they hear His sayings and do them.

Bible scholars discuss at length whether this is the same account as Matthew 5-7. Some picture a level "plain" on the side of the mountain that bring Matthew's and Luke's geographical settings together. Many teachings are very similar, but some (such as the woes in Luke 6:24-26) are very different. Also, Luke has this discourse following the choosing of the twelve disciples, whereas Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is well in advance of that event. As central to the Gospel message as the contents of these chapters are, Jesus likely gave similar teaching on various occasions.

Jesus taught that the Christian life is more than a mere belief. Those who "know in [their] heart what it means" show by their relationship to God (6:20-23), their enemies (6:27-36), and their brethren (6:37-42) that their inner life bears quality fruit. Jesus did not promise material gain or a life of ease for serving Him. Rather, the blessings pronounced include present and future spiritual blessings.

A sermon could be preached on each verse of this text, so do not spend too

much time on periphery today. Our aim is to teach how to put these teachings of Christ into shoe leather. Be ready share with others from the inspiration of your own study and experience, be ready to learn from others and grow together in Christian experience and community. While we are all New Testament Christians, the requirements of Christ's teachings will keep us pressing toward the mark as long as we are in this life.

**Lesson Aim:** To teach New Testament requirements for our attitudes and actions.

**Theme Verse:** [Luke 6:40](#). The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

## Lesson Text

### Rejoicing in Adversity

[Luke 6:20-23](#)

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. <sup>21</sup> Blessed *are ye* that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed *are ye* that weep now: for ye shall laugh. <sup>22</sup> Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you *from their company*, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. <sup>23</sup> Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward *is* great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

## Relating to Others

[Luke 6:27-31](#)

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, <sup>28</sup> Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you. <sup>29</sup> And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to take thy* coat also. <sup>30</sup> Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask *them* not again. <sup>31</sup> And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

[Luke 6:36-45](#)

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. <sup>37</sup> Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: <sup>38</sup> Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men

give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. <sup>39</sup> And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? <sup>40</sup> The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. <sup>41</sup> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? <sup>42</sup> Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. <sup>43</sup> For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. <sup>45</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

## **Responding to the Word**

[Luke 6:46-49](#)

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? <sup>47</sup> Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. <sup>49</sup> But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Rejoicing in Adversity**

1. What are some blessings of poverty and hunger, and how can we experience them?
2. For what things should we be weeping now?
3. How should the Christian seek the blessings of hatred and reproach?

### **Relating to Others**

4. What are some directions for relating to those who reproach us?
5. What principles should guide our relationships in the brotherhood?
6. Why is good fruit essential to a Christian life, and how is it produced?

## **Responding to the Word**

7. Who are the true servants of Christ?

8. How can we know that our house will stand the test?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

Jesus began and ended His teachings with the spotlight on our inner spiritual condition. The center portion of the discourse focuses on our relationships with enemies (6:27-36) and with brethren (6:37-42).

The four blessings (6:20-23) are followed by corresponding woes (6:24-26). This pairing helps us to evaluate differences between these blessings and the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. The poor (6:20) are "the poor of this world" who are "rich in faith" (James 2:5). The hungry are those whose food supply is barely sufficient. These verses, as well as other Scriptures, teach that being rich and living comfortably bring spiritual danger.

The Golden Rule (6:31) is a key to good interpersonal relationships. Verse 36 restates this main principle in other words. Returning good for evil, refusing to have a judgmental, condemning spirit, being quick to forgive, and giving unselfishly are practical expressions of these principles. Is Jesus teaching that we do good to others for the benefit that we get in return? No, but He is teaching us the principle that others will generally relate to us the way we relate to them.

The idea of trying to remove a splinter from our brother's eye while there is a timber in our own eye is rather preposterous. But the spiritual parallel is all too human. He who has first critically examined himself is most qualified to faithfully deal with the faults of others.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Rejoicing in Adversity**

1. Jesus calls us to forgo present pleasures for future fulfillment (6:20, 21). Those who enjoy this world to the full have little to look forward to (6:24). What sacrifice is too great for you? Is it too much of a sacrifice to get to church on time regularly or to stay awake in church? Would it be too much of a sacrifice to sell your business to go to the mission field or to downsize to give more time to your family and the church?

What is worth more to you than a good meal? Would you consider fasting to beseech God for your own spiritual welfare and the welfare of those you love? Whether or not you are willing to reject the pleasures of this world makes a difference in where you will spend eternity.

2. As we willingly suffer for Jesus' sake now, we can anticipate great re-

ward in heaven (6:22, 23). We should be acquainted with ridicule and rejection for Jesus' sake. In fact, we should be more concerned if all men speak well of us than if the world hates us. Our lifestyle should draw a clear line of separation between us and the world, yea, even between us and many so-called Christians. For the sufferings which come because we take up the cross and follow our Lord, we do not grumble. We rejoice! "Heaven will surely be worth it all."

### **Relating to Others**

3. The New Testament requires nonresistance as a way of life (6:27-30). Loving our enemies, turning the other cheek, and watching a thief make off with life's necessities are far from natural. The way we relate to the little issues in daily life is a truer test of our integrity in this area than whether we would consider joining the army or not. How our children relate to the brother or sister that crosses their path could be an indication of whether nonresistance is a way of life for us. Despite our best efforts to be a good example, they will still need to be taught.

4. The Golden Rule should be our motto for relating to others (6:31). This rule takes us beyond the doctrine of nonresistance. The Golden Rule calls us to put ourselves in another's shoes in every situation and to relate to him the way we would want to be related to. This requires love and compassion and a willingness to put ourselves last. We will be merciful, forgiving, humble, and sharing.

5. The New Testament calls us to be merciful in dealing with others (6:36-38). God has been very merciful to us. But Jesus' teaching is clear that the mercy we receive is measured in the portion that we measure to others. We talk about giving good measure when selling our products, but these verses are in the context of forgiveness. "Judge not.... condemn not," but forgive in good measure.

6. The New Testament calls us to careful self-examination before addressing an issue in our brother (6:41, 42). It is much easier to see our brother's faults than to see our own. Who would want to have someone working on their eyes if that person cannot see clearly himself? We must prayerfully search our own lives and open ourselves to the examination of our brethren to make sure that there is no beam there. Then when we see clearly, some of the motes in our brethren will vanish. Those that remain, we will be able to remove with tenderness and love.

7. The New Testament requires a renewed inner life that bears good fruit (6:43-45). The fruit of a tree tells us what kind of tree it is. The quality of that fruit evidences the type of soil from which the tree draws its nutrients.

What may look on the outside to be developing nicely can later give evidence of serious inner deficiencies. We must have a renewed mind and a committed heart for good fruit to set. For that fruit to grow and mature, we need a constant diet of feeding on God's Word.

### **Responding to the Word**

8. As Lord, Jesus requires obedience to all that He has taught (6:46). Many call Him Lord. A few show by their obedience to His sayings that He is their Lord. Obedience is not haphazard but requires attention, forethought, effort, and persistence. If Jesus is Lord, we take His Word at face value. We are also ready to follow the direction of a Biblical church. We sacrifice our own agenda, laying down our lives to serve Him fully.

9. The New Testament requires diligent building on the true foundation (6:47-49). Many are trusting in the sands of earth. Houses of good works decorated with flowery words will not stand. A house of salvation through faith in Christ will be built on "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). The works and words of this house builder are not for show or pretense. Instead, they are the outworking of his constant effort to build a haven for his soul that will stand the test.

### **Important Teachings**

1. Jesus calls us to forgo present pleasures for future fulfillment (6:20-21).
2. As we willingly suffer for Jesus' sake now, we can anticipate great reward in heaven (6:22-23).
3. The New Testament requires nonresistance as a way of life (6:27-30).
4. The Golden Rule should be our motto for relating to others (6:31).
5. The New Testament calls us to be merciful in dealing with others (6:36-38).
6. The New Testament calls us to careful self-examination before addressing an issue in our brother (6:41-42).
7. The New Testament requires a renewed inner life that bears good fruit (6:43-45).
8. As Lord, Jesus requires obedience to all that He has taught (6:46).
9. The New Testament requires diligent building on the true foundation (6:47-49).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What are some blessings of poverty and hunger, and how can we experience them?

Those who are poor in this world yet rich in faith can inherit great spiritual blessings in the kingdom of God. Those who hunger can look forward to heaven where we will not hunger anymore.

Living in a culture where poverty and hunger can be easily avoided, we must maintain spiritual values. What is most important to us? Can we control the size of our business so that we have time to contribute to the Lord's work? Would we be willing to fast in order to focus more clearly on the things of God?

2. For what things should we be weeping now?

We should weep for the sins we have committed and for the spiritual needs in our lives, our families, and our communities. We should weep for the losses God's kingdom has experienced because of our selfishness or neglect. We should weep for the many who have turned their backs on truth.

3. How should the Christian seek the blessings of hatred and reproach?

While we do not go out asking for reproach, New Testament Christian living will bring reproaches with it. Separation and nonresistance will draw lines that put us and the world at opposite poles. The message of truth will cut to the heart and bring a variety of negative responses. Christian business principles, though often cause for admiration, have their aspects of self-denial that others will deride.

4. What are some directions for relating to those who reproach us?

We must, as Christ, be as a lamb dumb before the shearers. We should turn the other cheek, expecting and accepting more reproach. We should pray for those who despitefully use us. We will look for opportunities to show God's love to them in whatever way we can.

5. What principles should guide our relationships in the brotherhood?

The Golden Rule helps us put ourselves in another's shoes. We are to be merciful and forgiving to others, rather than judgmental and condemning. Unselfishness helps us to give in gracious portions, the way we would wish to receive. We must first critique ourselves and open ourselves to the criticism of our brethren before we are qualified to deal with the faults of others.

6. Why is good fruit essential to a Christian's life, and how is it produced?

The fruits reveal the quality of the tree. Good fruit includes the fruit of the Spirit, which a bramble bush cannot simulate.

To make the fruit good, you must make the tree good. The new birth is essential to having a good tree. Good nutrition—feeding on the Word of God and fellowshiping with other believers—is important for the tree to bear good fruit.

7. Who are the true servants of Christ?

The true servants of Christ are those who obey their Lord's commands. They are not halfhearted or nonchalant, but with energy and persistence strive to serve Him.

8. How can we know that our house will stand the test?

We must examine the foundation. Did we dig deep? Are we on the Rock? We must build according to God's plan. We must be willing to follow His direction, which includes the direction that comes from spiritual brethren. They can help us to know if our house will stand.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

While the New Testament believer is free from the rituals of the Old Testament Law, he is by no means free to do as he pleases. In fact, the "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" justice that the Old Covenant required somewhat fits the natural mind. Only by a renewed mind and a Holy Spirit directed life can one follow the precepts Christ outlined in this chapter. Though the old man must be crucified, the inner man can grow and flourish, first by the experience of God's love and mercy, and then by the security of an unshakeable faith in God that is evidenced by obedience to His Word.

### **Research Guide**

Read Matthew 5-7 for parallel teachings to this lesson.